



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

Issue 13-137

September 18, 2013

Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

CA's parole population changing since realignment

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Demographics of people using home broadband connections

ECONOMY

Uneven progress for CA workers during the economic recovery

EDUCATION

Humanities education could strengthen America in the 21st century

EMPLOYMENT

Long-term unemployed differ in education, family composition

ENERGY

2013 electricity price in California 70% higher than 2012

ENVIRONMENT

NOAA study shows impact of climate change on extreme weather

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

State budgets: lessons learned from the recession

HEALTH

Re-certification of Critical Access Hospitals could result in Medicare savings

HOUSING

Task force makes sweeping recommendations following Hurricane Sandy

HUMAN SERVICES

Caregiver demographics important to aging population

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

State highway agencies' construction forecasting tools lack validation

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

California's Changing Parole Population. By Ryken Grattet, et al. Public Policy Institute of California. Aug. 2013. 2 p.

http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_show.asp?i=1066

"California's parole population had been in gradual decline from 163,000 at its peak in 2007 to 127,000 on October 1, 2011, when public safety realignment began. On that day, responsibility for supervising a large number of nonserious, nonviolent felons shifted from the state to the counties. By July 2013, the parole

population was 56,500. Since realignment took effect, the percentage reduction in the parole population has been three times greater than that of the prison population.” A parole population shift towards those with more serious offenses (due to the parole population having minor offenses no longer being handled at the state level); a higher percentage of African Americans in the parole system (6% of the adult population in California, yet 29% of the parole population); a lower percentage of female parolees (nearly 10,000 in 2012; about 4,200 thus far in 2013); parole violators are no longer being sent back to prison; and fewer than 50% of the parolees are considered “high risk” to reoffend are highlighted in this report.

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Home Broadband 2013. By Kathryn Zickuhr, et al. Pew Research Center. Aug. 2013. 14 p.
http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_Broadband%202013_082613.pdf

In May 2013, approximately 70% of adults in the United States had broadband connections at home. “The demographic factors most correlated with home broadband adoption continue to be educational attainment, age, and household income. Almost nine in ten college graduates have high-speed internet at home, compared with just 37% of adults who have not completed high school. Similarly, adults under age 50 are more likely than older adults to have broadband at home, and those living in households earning at least \$50,000 per year are more likely to have home broadband than those at lower income levels.” An additional 10% have a smartphone connection but no home broadband connection.

ECONOMY

Uneven Progress: What the Economic Recovery Has Meant for California’s Workers. By Luke Reidenbach. California Budget Project. Sep. 3, 2013. 12 p.
http://www.cbp.org/pdfs/2013/130901_Uneven_Progress_Labor%20Day.pdf

“This report provides an in-depth look at the state’s economy and key trends in employment and earnings. It shows that California is experiencing a sustained increase in employment and has added nearly 770,000 jobs since early 2010. Still, even after three-plus years of job gains ... long-term unemployment remains at a record high, with 34 out of 58 counties stuck in double-digit unemployment.... Compared with prior periods of job growth, the current recovery is more heavily reliant on service industry employment that typically pays lower wages.”

EDUCATION

The Heart of the Matter: The Humanities and Social Sciences for a Vibrant, Competitive and Secure Nation. American Academy of Arts and Sciences. July 2013. 92 p.
http://www.humanitiescommission.org/pdf/hss_report.pdf

Following a bipartisan request from Congress in 2010, this report seeks to “advance a dialogue on the importance of the humanities and social sciences to the future of our nation.” The report puts forward goals designed to educate Americans in humanities and the social sciences, improve language and fund transnational studies, which would ultimately improve America’s competitiveness and leadership capabilities in the 21st century.

EMPLOYMENT

Who are the Long-term Unemployed? By Josh Mitchell. Urban Institute. July 2013. 20 p.
<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412885-who-are-the-long-term-unemployed.pdf>

“More than three and a half years since the official end of the Great Recession ... 4.7 million, 39% of all unemployed workers, have been actively searching for a job for 27 weeks or longer.... Relative to currently employed workers, the long-term unemployed tend to be less educated and are more likely to be nonwhite, unmarried, disabled, impoverished, and to have worked previously in the construction industry and construction occupations. However, the long-term unemployed have much more in common with workers who are newly unemployed or workers who have become discouraged and dropped out of the labor force.”

ENERGY

California ISO: Q2 2013 Report on Market Issues and Performance. California Independent System Operator Corp., Dept. of Market Monitoring. Aug. 21, 2013. 65 p.
http://www.caiso.com/Documents/2013SecondQuarterReport-MarketIssues_Performance-Aug2013.pdf

Electricity market prices in the first half of 2013 were about 70% higher than the same period in 2012. The Independent System Operator (ISO) attributes this to increased prices for natural gas and the implementation of California's greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program, as well as a decrease in hydro-electric production.

ENVIRONMENT

“Explaining Extreme Events of 2012 from a Climate Perspective.” By Thomas C. Peterson, et al. *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* (Special Supplement), vol. 94, no. 9 (Sep. 2013) 106 p.
<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/news/explaining-extreme-events-2012-climate-perspective>

Although natural variations in weather and climate played the largest role in extreme weather events in 2012, an analysis headed by scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) found evidence that human-induced climate change was a contributing factor in the occurrence and severity of droughts, hurricanes, heavy rains, extreme temperatures, and record low ice levels in the Arctic Sea.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

State Budgeting and Lessons Learned from the Economic Downturn – Analysis and Commentary from State Budget Officers. By Michael Streepy, et al. National Association of State Budget Officers. July 31, 2013. 48 p.
<http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/State%20Budgeting%20and%20Lessons%20Learned%20from%20the%20Economic%20Downturn-final.pdf>

What did state budget officers learn from relying on rainy day funds, federal aid, tax increases and budget cuts during the recession? (1) States must develop very deep rainy day funds and delay their use until after budget cuts have been made. For many states, these reserves were not enough. (2) Federal aid must have more cohesive goals and better coordination with state programs. (3) Temporary tax increases tied to economic conditions, rather than a fiscal or calendar year, may be more effective. (4) Combined

“across-the-board” cuts and targeted spending reductions appear to cause the least disruption and help solve structural budget imbalances.

HEALTH

Most Critical Access Hospitals Would Not Meet the Location Requirements if Required to Re-enroll in Medicare. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General. Aug. 2013. 38 p.
<http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-05-12-00080.asp>

Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) are hospitals that qualify for more Medicare reimbursement than standard hospitals because they benefit rural communities. Most CAHs are permanently certified as having met specific location requirements. In this report, OIG mapped the location of CAHs in the United States and concluded that, if CAHs were required to re-apply for certification, many would no longer qualify, resulting in a substantial savings to the Medicare program. Currently, there are 497 CAHs in California.

HOUSING

Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy: Stronger Communities, A Resilient Region. Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force. Aug. 2013. 208 p.
<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/sandyrebuilding>

In 2012, President Obama signed an executive order creating the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force. This report is the culmination of the task force’s directive to identify and work to remove obstacles to resilient rebuilding and to create a plan for long-term sustainability. The report includes specific suggestions and ideas to promote resilient rebuilding, provide safe and affordable housing options for disaster victims, and revitalize local economies hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy.

HUMAN SERVICES

Adult Caregivers in the United States: Characteristics and Differences in Well-being, by Caregiver Age and Caregiving Status. By Lynda Anderson, et al. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Aug. 15, 2013. 5 p.
http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2013/13_0090.htm

“[This report] examined the characteristics of adults providing regular care or assistance to friends or family members who have health problems.... Caregivers were significantly more likely to be 50 to 64 years of age than from other age groups, to be female than male, and to be non-Hispanic black than from other racial/ethnic groups. Caregivers were significantly more likely to have some college education than to have a high school education or less or to be a college graduate; they were also significantly more likely to be married or part of an unmarried couple than to be divorced, separated, widowed, or never married.... Compared with younger caregivers, older caregivers reported more fair or poor health and physical distress but more satisfaction with life and lower mental distress.”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Forecasting Highway Construction Staffing Requirements: A Synthesis of Highway Practice. By Timothy R.B. Taylor, et al. Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Science. National Cooperative Highway Research Program Synthesis 450. Sep. 2013. 85 p.
http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_syn_450.pdf

Only seven state transportation agencies (including Caltrans) use some type of formal system to estimate construction staffing needs for future projects. "Recent work in examining the accuracy of contract time determination at STAs demonstrated the lack of accuracy in at least some [of] these tools for estimating contract time. Part of the reason for this inaccuracy was the lack of validation of the tools.... Of the construction staffing forecasting tools examined in the current work, none reported any validation efforts to date."

About *Studies in the News*

Studies in the News (SITN) is a service provided by the California Research Bureau (CRB), a division of the California State Library. CRB provides independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the Governor, Legislature and State Constitutional Officers.

- SITN lists of current studies related to public policy issues are e-mailed weekly. Archived issues are available at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb>.
- To add or remove your name from the SITN distribution list, or to update your e-mail address, please contact us at crb@library.ca.gov, or (916) 319-2691.
- SITN is available as an RSS feed at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb/>.